

# Save the Date

The Next Project DeRenne Citizen Workshop is scheduled for:

**Tuesday, October 21, 2008**  
**6PM**  
**Location TBD**

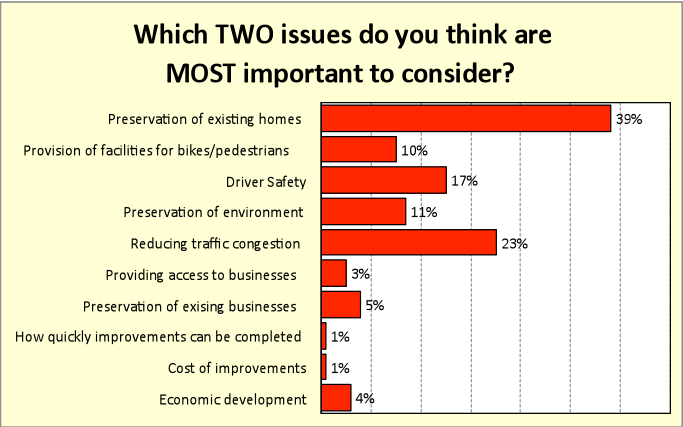
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*The approach to Project DeRenne is different.*  
*Project DeRenne is a process for developing long term solutions through citizen engagement for the DeRenne Avenue Corridor*

At the August 12 workshop, participants completed an **attitudinal survey**. Below is the result of one of the survey questions.



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## First Citizen Workshop a SUCCESS

After several months of preparation (and for many, years of nervous anticipation), Tuesday night, August 12<sup>th</sup>, brought Project DeRenne directly into the public eye with the first citizen workshop. Despite the evening rain, about 200 people filled the main auditorium at the Jewish Educational Alliance Center for almost two hours to both hear what the City had to say about the project, and to share their opinions as to the past, present, and future of this critical corridor.



### What the Project Team had to say...

After introductions of the hosting Project Advisory Committee (PAC), the City's consultant team proceeded to express three key messages:

- the past** – as a community we need to park any accumulated baggage relating to DeRenne at the door and move forward with an open mind and a fresh perspective. The phrase that stuck in the mind of many was “we cannot drive this project forward while looking in the rear view mirror.”

- the present** – DeRenne Avenue is a critical part of the local and regional transportation system of Savannah. DeRenne is the regional extension of Interstate I-516 to the Harry Truman Parkway, but also a local street providing critical local connectivity to numerous neighborhoods, businesses and civic uses.
- the future** – over the last 50 years DeRenne has grown with the surrounding community from a two-lane dirt road into the busy urban arterial it is today. What DeRenne will be in the future is very much a function of finding the critical balance between DeRenne's transportation role and DeRenne's place as a good neighbor to the existing community.

### What the public had to say...

At the conclusion of the Project Team's remarks, the attendees worked at individual tables of 7 to 8 people to answer a series of questions about what is important about DeRenne:

- Do you think there is a traffic problem along the DeRenne Avenue corridor?
- Have/do you walk or bike along DeRenne Avenue corridor?
- Have/do you use transit along the corridor?
- What destinations/resources do you value most in the corridor?
- Are there any areas along the corridor that appear to be appropriate for change?
- What would you like to see more of/less of along the DeRenne Avenue corridor?

(Continued onto pg 2)

Next Citizen Workshop: Tuesday, October 21!!!

# Public Workshop (cont. from front page)

After sharing ideas as a group, each table undertook the challenging exercise of trying to prioritize the five sometimes competing interests within a transportation corridor:

- traffic
- neighborhood preservation
- bike/pedestrian access
- commercial revitalization
- beautification/ streetscape

The results were shared and displayed on a “priority tree” Each individual interest was ranked in order of importance as established by the group participating at each table.



Although a lot of work is yet to be done to fully understand the complex inter-relationships between all of the competing interests, this exercise served as a great tool to get people thinking, talking and compromising. Results by table varied, but one priority that seemed to be ranked very highly by all tables was neighborhood preservation.

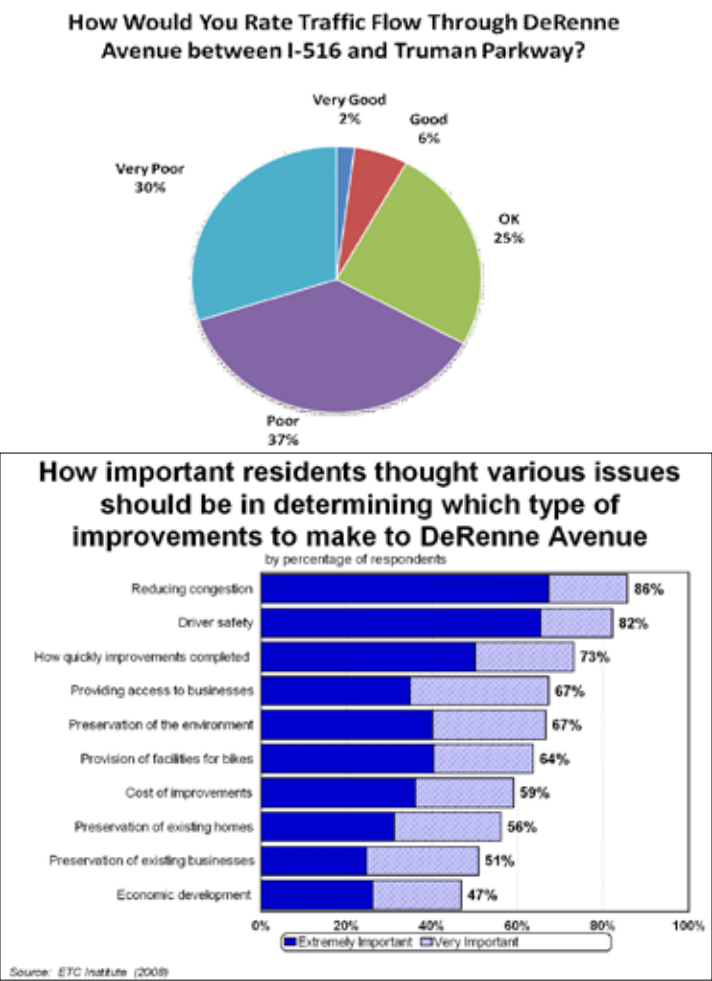
As a final send off, the Project Team asked project participants to leave one final wish as it related to the future of Project DeRenne. This wish is either for one thing they would like to see changed or one thing they would like to remain the same. Of course there were a wide range of answers, but a random sampling of some of the wishes included the following:

- More diverse businesses
- Preserve homes
- Change traffic patterns - make safer
- Tax incentives for improvements
- Change traffic timing and patterns
- Change curb cuts

The Project DeRenne Advisory Committee would like to *sincerely thank* everyone who planned, facilitated and attended the first workshop.

# Project Progress

Phase I of Project DeRenne includes public outreach and data collection. Over the past couple of months, the project team has been busy developing an understanding of what is important to the residents, commercial interests and/or other entities that are directly influenced by the DeRenne corridor as well as the general user of DeRenne - through meetings with the PAC, stakeholder interviews, a travel survey, and the first public workshop. Stakeholder interviews are complete, and an interview was conducted with representatives from each of the following stakeholder groups: **Hunter, St. Joseph's/ Candler, Memorial, Savannah Park and Tree, Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods, Savannah-Chatham Schools, and Savannah Tech.** Additionally, a phone survey was administered in June to over 400 participants who frequently travel DeRenne Avenue but do not live within the study area. They were asked questions relating to their travel behavior, perception of DeRenne, and priorities when considering improvements that may be made to the corridor. The results from two survey questions are shown below.

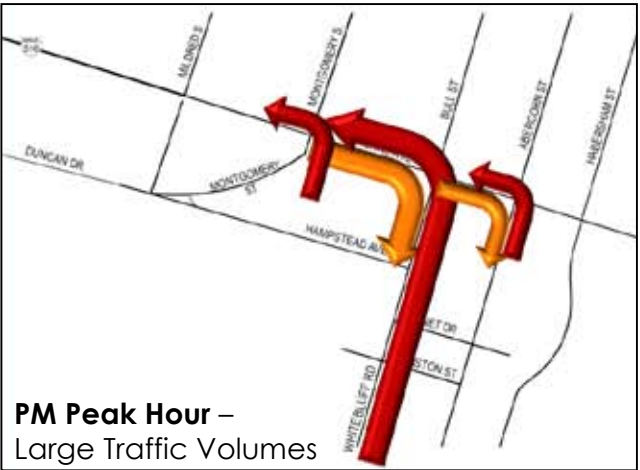


# Project Progress (cont.)

In addition to gaining an understanding of the DeRenne community's values, the project team has also been performing data collection and traffic analysis. This data is used to quantify the traffic volumes along the DeRenne corridor and analyze the congestion during the morning and evening peak hours. The project team has performed analysis for existing conditions and projected future year (2030) conditions at the signalized intersections on DeRenne Avenue between Montgomery Street and the Harry Truman Parkway. Based on this analysis, the west side of the corridor (Montgomery St to Habersham St) operates at less than an industry-acceptable level while the east side of the corridor (Reynolds St to Truman Pkwy NB Ramp) operates at an industry-acceptable level. Additionally, the highest volume turning-movements were observed to occur at DeRenne Ave and Abercorn St and DeRenne Ave and White Bluff Rd as shown below for the morning and evening peak hours.



AM Peak Hour – Large Traffic Volumes



PM Peak Hour – Large Traffic Volumes

# More Than a Road

Much attention has been given to the transportation components of Project DeRenne. However, it is equally important to understand and consider **land use, urban design** and integration of the built environment - all of which contribute to the creation of a sense of place. In order to accomplish this task, the City of Savannah has partnered with the MPC to undertake a comprehensive understanding of what we have (supply) and what the market can support (demand). This exercise begins with a fundamental inventory of land uses within the study area as well as existing **zoning** (*zoning is a set of districts that govern the use, placement, spacing and size of development*). In addition, a **market study** has been prepared, which includes an analysis of demographic trends and an economic assessment in the study area. Combined, these two items create a preliminary inventory of future land use opportunities. The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) will be reviewing the land use inventory and the market study information during their September meeting. In addition, the PAC will play an instrumental role in the identification of locations where positive changes in use, intensity and urban form may be appropriate. The identification of a community vision for land use and urban design plays an instrumental role



Urban design considers elements in the public realm that provide three-dimensional physical form for the built environment.

in determining the future of DeRenne Avenue. In short, any changes to the roadway need to respond to developed goals and support the community vision.